

Press-Herald

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Good Schools Come First

What is to be the course for Torrance schools during the years immediately ahead, and who is to be at the helm.

Stripped of the campaign oratory which has taken a number of directions, those are the primary issues of the biennial election next Tuesday to select members of the Torrance Board of Education.

The Press-Herald has been well aware of the charges and counter-charges of the spirited campaigns being waged by several of the candidates. Election of this candidate, we are told, will pave the way to ouster of the present administration leaders. Election of another candidate will lead the way to a "rubber stamp" board which will be dominated by the administrators, we're warned.

The Press-Herald is interested in good schools, and we believe everyone charged with a responsibility in our school system has a duty to the people beyond a particular administrator, or a particular board member or members.

We are not interested in whether our particular position in the campaign will help or hurt any shade of opinion—we are interested in having a board of education and a school administration that can work effectively for the city's school children. We want the best education for our children that can be obtained at the lowest possible cost.

In this regard a number of candidates have made impressive campaigns for one of the three board seats at stake.

Incumbent Bert M. Lynn must be considered a front runner. During his four year term on the board he has found himself in the middle of controversies several times, he has been a thorn in the side of other board members, and has nettled the administration.

Despite this we are convinced that Mr. Lynn has made a major contribution to our schools—that he has been an asset to the community. We are likewise convinced that Mr. Lynn's re-election would be in the best interests of all, students and taxpayers alike.

We also, along with others, have been impressed with H. Arch Williams, a certified public accountant, who has campaigned on the premise that the taxpayer should still get a little more for his dollar. We believe Mr. Williams could perform a valuable service as a watchdog on tax rates, budgets, and the spending programs.

Several others in the race have waged strong campaigns based on sound issues. Among these is Mrs. Beverly Schwartz, who may be handicapped by the fact that a woman already sits on the board and because it is hard in a large community like Torrance to gain the exposure needed to win.

Torrance has a state and national reputation as having good schools. We are interested in maintaining and improving that reputation . . . not through any promotional activities but because it is true.

The El Camino Race

As is too often the case, the campaign for the important Torrance representation on the El Camino Board of Trustees has received scant attention from the voters.

El Camino is there, it has wonderful campus facilities, an enviable reputation as an educational institution, and no apparent worries.

That is what has disturbed John G. L. Crain, who has campaigned for the seat now held by Jack N. Dabbs.

We have no quarrel with Mr. Dabbs and have every assurance that he has been an able representative of Torrance on this important board. We do not now suggest one candidate above the other.

What we do suggest, is that some of the points raised by Mr. Crain during his campaign be checked further after the election next Tuesday. He asks, for example, whether the pay-as-you go capital improvement financing is better than a bonded program.

He asks whether the building program is being done in the most economical manner consistent with providing adequate facilities for the student population.

He has asked other questions about finances, instruction, and school problems, and has reported that he finds very few people conversant with the programs and problems of El Camino.

We concur in his desire to see a broader interest in El Camino affairs and hope the successful candidate Tuesday will resolve to work toward that end.

El Camino is an important asset for this community. We should do all we can to keep it that way.

Morning Report:

Trust Lyndon Johnson to get on the popular side of the annual struggle between tax-collectors and tax-payers. It turns out he didn't have enough glue on hand to meet his income tax bite and had to borrow \$100,000. A lot of people can identify with the President, although on a much lesser scale.

It makes you wonder though how come a private millionaire with a public salary of 150 Gs can't hold on to enough to pay Uncle. He doesn't gamble, is a moderate drinker, and non-smoker. Warm water in the White House swimming pool? The Government picks up that tab.

It must be Lady Bird is buying too much on credit. After all, he can't blame the tax law like the rest of us. He wrote it.

Abe Mellinkoff



ROYCE BRIER

Some Speculations About Putting Man on the Moon

The Russians have a flair for immensity in the uses of mechanical power, and we have a flair for minute instrumentation. This seems to be the lesson of the almost simultaneous space flights of the Voskhod 2 from one country, the Gemini and Ranger 9 from the other.

But which of these supposed aptitudes can first get a man to the moon and return him, is a purely speculative question. Equally speculative is which aptitude will be the most effective in the larger undertaking of exploring the Solar System.

Under the reasonably certain knowledge we now possess, only Mars as a wild gamble and Venus at the remotest of possibilities, are fit targets for a manned visit in the next century.

This does not mean they, and other planets, may not be reached by instrumented vehicles in the next century.

WILLIAM HOGAN

One Man's Story of His Struggle to be Accepted

It would be nice to think that Horace R. Cayton's autobiography, "Long Old Road," could get into some key southern schools. Or key Northern and Western schools, for that matter. At this moment, it is obviously too explosive a document for Southern school libraries. Yet it is published, and may see into unsuspected quarters.

It is a particularly American story by a Negro intellectual and veteran professor of sociology who frankly states: "Yes, I hate white people. . . . Not all white people, of course — some I like, but the idea of white people in general."

Again: "I'm sick to death of the strain in every human relationship between Negroes and whites. . . . I'm tired of forever giving reassurances about color." What he'd like best would be to live as an individual, a plain American without a special cause. But this has been impossible since his middle-class boyhood in Seattle. Or as a graduate student at the University of Chicago; a frustrated teacher at Tuskegee Institute; later in Paris; or as a newspaper correspondent at the United Nations where he found he could not identify with African Negroes, culturally or otherwise, because "for the most of us, and this includes

me, this is our home, our country."

As an educated Negro, Cayton stood between two worlds, always partially alienated from both. The strain was immense. It led him to an excessive drinking problem, a mental crack-up and psychoanalysis. He was always seeking a job where he was not controlled by white philanthropy. The problem of being "displayed" as a prominent Negro at white social gatherings got to be too much.

Among other things in this moving and unflinchingly honest book, Cayton attempts to analyze his relations with white women. This is touchy ground, but in describing these alliances he reveals much about the peculiar chemistry that is stirred by white guilt and fear of Negroes. His vignette of the late Negro-collecting Nancy Cunard is withering. Equally so is his account of a stay at Sinclair Lewis' estate not long before the eccentric novelist's death.

Who am I, and why? a proud man seems to be asking throughout this catalogue of innermost thoughts. One must concede that this quest for identity resulted in almost impossible pressures in a sensitive man — whose maternal grandfather

presents a formidable problem which won't be overcome tomorrow. It entails extensive work in techniques as yet unproved, and a steady and reliable train of supply vehicles.

The image of Colonel Leonov floating in space tethered to his capsule did not enhance the ultimate possibility of a space platform. On the contrary it testified to the difficulty, for he was not a working man, but a plaything of his environment.

If, however, you can achieve a platform, say in five or ten years, you are still only a short step to solving the whole moon-man proposition. For you must devise a way to get him from the platform to the lunar crust, and return him alive to the platform.

If you can do that, you've got it made—as a stunt. But each of our advances so far recorded makes a 1970 deadline appear more chimerical.

was a United States Senator from Mississippi, one Hiram Revels, a Negro, who took the seat left vacant by Jefferson Davis.

"Long Old Road" carries emphatic sociological overtones, and certainly psychological ones. It is not, oddly enough, a bitter document. It is a powerful personal story that must be read beyond the clique of white liberals (Cayton delivers some caustic comment on them) who will automatically agree with him and, once again, put him on the back.

Will the book be read in Mississippi, Hiram Revels' old constituency? Perhaps not this season, but it will be eventually, for Cayton's story is a shattering sidelight to the mainstream of our history.

My Neighbors



County Loses \$50 Million Yearly in Tax Exemptions

By PHILIP E. WATSON
Los Angeles County Assessor
(Fifth in a Series)

In theory, all privately owned property is subject to local property taxation. In fact, because of the multiplicity of exemptions, more than four per cent of all privately-owned property in Los Angeles County enjoys complete or partial freedom from property taxation.

And the gap between what is theoretically taxable and what is in fact taxed is widening regularly, both through the granting of new interpretation of existing exemption legislation.

What does this mean to the average homeowner? It means that about \$30 of a typical tax bill of \$375 paid by the typical owner of a \$16,000 home represents taxes he is paying for someone else's exemption.

Before getting into discussion of any new exemption proposals, let's take a look at the ones now in existence (see box).

The total of \$570,000,000 in exempt property represents \$50,000,000 in taxes that was shifted to the balance of the taxpayers.

Oldest of these exemptions is the exemption for libraries and museums in 1894. Next came the church exemption in 1900, followed by the veteran exemption in 1911, the private colleges in 1914, and the welfare exemption in 1944.

(Contrary to popular belief, the veteran exemption was not passed as a "bonus" for California veterans. It was actually an inducement to attract out-of-state veterans to settle in California at a time when the state was concerned about building up its population. The \$5,000 limitation, written into the original law and never changed, was the average value of an improved homestead property. If it were to be considered a bonus, it is a most untimely one since it benefits only a minority of veterans. It does not benefit a veteran who doesn't own property, nor does it benefit a veteran whose assets exceed the limit.)

There are certain other constitutional exemptions to which no value can be ascribed because the nature of the exemption is such that the Assessor does not make any special appraisal of the exempt value. One such is the cemetery exemption, which provides that only that portion of cemetery property which is not yet sold is subject to property taxation. Our department consequently only appraises the unsold portion.

Another, and one of the earliest exemptions, is the exemption of growing crops. As a look at the chart will disclose, the second largest category of exempt properties are those which qualify under the welfare exemption. This includes private elementary and high schools, charitable institutions, hospitals, YMCA, YWCA, homes for senior citizens, etc.

Though this exemption is only 20 years old, it now accounts for about one-fourth of all exemptions granted in Los Angeles County and is the fastest-growing exemption category. It has been expanded both through legislation and court decision until it now provides a tax shelter for many kinds of properties not originally envisioned as benefiting under its provisions.

One example may illustrate: Under the Constitution, property must be used "exclusively for religious, hospital or charitable purposes" to qualify for the exemption. Our department consequently denied the exemption claims of institutions furnishing high-cost housing for senior citizens on the ground that such institutions were not "charitable." However, we were overruled by the Supreme Court which said that "a home for the aged which caters to wealthy persons does not cease to be a charitable institution so long as its charges do not yield more than the actual cost of operation."

Such expansion of existing exemptions and the ad-

Exemption	No. of Claims	Assessed Value Exempted
Veteran	262,417	249,423,000
Welfare	1,881	155,873,750
Church	3,827	108,706,000
Private Colleges	49	48,440,000
Libraries and Museums	20	7,803,500
Miscellaneous	7	106,000
TOTAL		570,346,250

dition of new exempt categories has been the rule, not just in California, but throughout the United States. As each new group of properties is exempt, this furnishes the impetus for another group to seek an exemption for their benefit.

The present legislative session will be dealing with two large-scale exemption groups — the exemption of business inventories and exemption for elderly citizens who own their own homes.

The loss of tax revenue from business inventories would shift at least 10 per cent of the total tax burden to the balance of property owners unless there is a strict provision made for replacing this revenue to local government from other sources.

The effect of exempting property owned by persons over 65 varies, depending on whether all or part of the property is exempt and on the income eligibility requirements. However, again there would be a shift of tax burden unless the revenue loss is replaced by

sources other than property taxes. Property tax experts generally oppose the exemption process because exemptions tend to "oster inequity, privilege and because they provide indirect subsidies for the exempt group at the expense of other groups.

However, there is one exemption that I have long campaigned for and which I hope will be passed at this legislative session . . . the exemption of household furnishings. This is a nuisance tax which is impossible to administer equitably, and the cost of assessment and collection is way out of proportion to the revenue brought in. Since it is a generally-distributed tax, its elimination would not represent any shift in burden.

By eliminating the tax, we would save the County almost as much money as it currently receives as its share of the household furnishings tax revenues.

Next week: "IT'S TIME TO PLACE A CEILING ON PROPERTY TAX."

HERB CAEN SAYS:

IN ONE EAR: If Clark Kerr is still reigning as Pres. of UC by the end of the year, I owe you the hat some people don't think they're talking through. . . . I guess it's about time for income tax jokes (what's so funny?). Mme. Cherie Charles describes the annual tap as "capital punishment," which is one way to put it. And Larry Blake points out that if you report your earnings honestly, they take them away from you, and if you report them dishonestly, they take YOU away. Or maybe it's never time for income tax jokes. . . . A spy of mine was at the airport and heard it with his own ears, over the public address system: "Dr. Martin Luther King, white courtesy telephone, please". . . . Bing Crosby's Hillsborough mansion—the one he bought a couple of yrs. ago for \$175,000 (and then sank more thousands into)—goes on the market for \$200,000; Mary Rose Pool of Carmel has the exclusive selling rights for the best of all possible reasons: she's his sister.

CAENDID CAMERA: A cop in a squad car hollering at a jaywalking priest: "Hey, Father, that ain't kosher!" . . . Private Eye Alain Gilstein, whose efficient-looking attache case contains—a bottle of chutney (he's a curry nut, and is amazed at how many restaurants don't stock Major Grey's gorgeous goo) . . . Holding his own among the Irish Coffee swillers at the Buena Vista: Jason "Hughie" Robards, as talented a two-fister as you'll find . . . Funny chapter title in "How to Survive Parenthood," by Eda Le Shan: "We All Wanted Babies, But Did Any of Us Want Children?"

NOTES & QUOTES: Comedienne Phyllis Diller now lives in St. Louis, "but," she adds, "San Francisco is still part of my life. My dressmaker, dentist, foot surgeon, eye doctor, lawyer and publisher are all there—without them, I'd fall to pieces." Explaining her splendid sun-tan: "I iron outdoors." And asked for a comment on the new fashions, she sighed: "I hate those shorter skirts—my legs don't go all the way up!" . . . Angelo Pellegrini, author of the newly published "Wine and the Good Life": "The greatest fear of wine drinkers is that they'll raise children who are abstemious. We were worried about our third child, who's 15, but he's coming around. He still doesn't like it, but he drinks it!" . . . "The Newsweek review on 'Nina's Book,' reports Author Eugene Burdick, "was so bad it made it sound dirty—so one Hollywood studio immediately doubled its bid. I admit it's nutty."

THE SHORT OF IT: Jason Robards, Jr., the tremendous actor, was depressed on Montgomery St. the other day. For one thing, he had lost his tie clip somewhere along the way. For another, he had left his wallet at the hotel and was penniless. But—ah, San Francisco? Ah: First he ran into Tommy McCarthy of Wells Fargo, who gave him one of the bank's "Stagecoach" tie clips and matching money clip. Then Louis Lurie came along to fill the clip with an autographed \$5 bill. As he lunched \$5 worth at Jack's, Robards grinned: "How can you beat a town that takes care of starving actors?" . . . All these years I've thought of Rusty Draper as an apple-cheeked young singer, and now—zunk—I found out that he has a 21-yr-old son named Johnny who's singing with a "chicken rock" group called The Blazers. "Chicken Rock?" Trade talk for comparatively quiet rock'n'roll.

HERBERT'S SHERBET: In hopes of Masanori Murakami's return to the Giants, the Yamato restaurant is about to add a new dish to the menu—Chicken Murakami. Not to be confused with Chicken Teriyaki, who, as all Steve Allen followers know, is the world's only living kamikaze pilot. . . . We can tie neatly into that by reporting that Jason Roberts Jr., now touring in "Hughie," was a radioman aboard the USS Honolulu—stationed at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941; he has worn that distinctive worried look ever since.